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ABSTRACT

This 10th grade social studies lesson and language arts interdisciplinary curriculum unit asks students to examine the 19th century debate over U.S. foreign policy. Students engage in role playing and debate the expansionist policy versus the anti-imperialist policy. The unit includes an activity description, background information, questions to guide research, online resources, and reflection questions. The teacher is provided with notes describing the unit's purpose, correlation to standards, and a guide that shows how to conduct the unit. (RJC)

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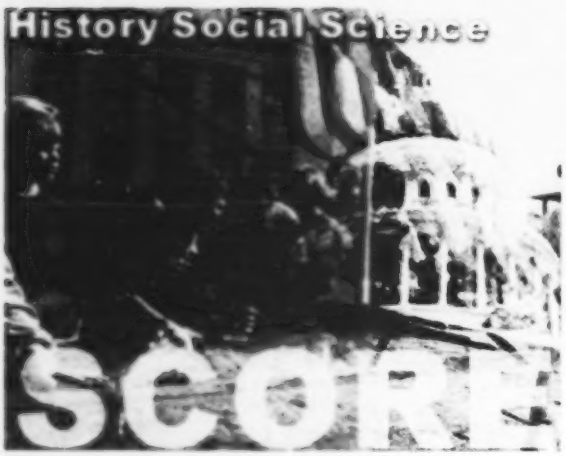

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White Man's Burden: The Expansionist/Anti-Imperialist Debate at the Turn of the Century

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Margaret Hill

10th Grade Lesson by Robert Kohen

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1999

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Artists Rendering of the Sinking of the Maine
Source: Chicago Historical society

White Man's Burden:

The Expansionist/Anti-Imperialist Debate at the Turn of the Century

"Let us not be misled by names. Imperialism is not a question of crowns and scepters, of names and titles. It is a system of government. Where a man or body of men, an Emperor, a President, a Congress, or a Nation, claims the absolute right to rule a people, to compel the submission of that people by brute force, to decide what rights they shall have, what taxes they shall pay, what judges shall administer their laws, what men shall govern them,--all without responsibility to the people thus governed--this is imperialism, the antithesis of free government".
(anit-Imperialist League 1901)

"The Opposition tells us that we ought not to govern a people without their consent. I answer, The rule of liberty that all just government derives its authority from ,the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self- government. I answer, We govern the Indians without their consent, we govern our territories without their consent, we govern our children without their consent. I answer, How do you assume that our government would be without their consent? Would not the

people of the Philippines prefer the just, humane, civilizing government of this republic to the savage, bloody rule of pillage and extortion from which we have rescued them? "
(Albert J. Beveridge, "March of the Flag," 16 September 1898)

Overview

Each era of history has presented unique challenges relating to the United States' role in the world. Since the late 19th century those challenges have involved its exercise of world power. At what point do the needs or desires of the United States supercede the autonomy of another country? These are not new questions. The end of the cold war has required the United States to examine its role as world policeman.

This unit asks you to step back in time to the turn of the century. A great debate is taking place between those who would have the United States follow an expansionist policy and those who are staunchly anti-imperialist. The pro- and anti-imperialist camps in the late 19th c. and early 20th c. were different from those that have emerged since the 1960s. There were some who took the high road and insisted that American expansion compromised American ideals and constitution, but more of them took their stance from racisim, ethnocentricism, xenophobia, and self-interest. Organized labor was anti-imperialist because it feared competition from cheap foreign labor. Many others, especially southerners (who were quite prominent in the movement) were worried about miscegenation, social intermingling with racial inferiors and non Christians. These assumptions were often unstated and understood in the debate and not always evident as you read the documents.

The Prompt:

The United States Senate

You are hereby subpoenaed by the United States Senate to appear for the purpose of giving testimony on the topic of Imperialism.

The United States Senate will conduct a hearing in October 1902. This hearing will allow individuals to address the Senate Committee on Pacific Expansion.

Presently our country is involved in a war in the Philippines to bring that country under the supervision of the United States. We have freed Cuba and established stable governments in our other newly acquired colonies-- Hawaii, Guam and Puerto Rico. A great debate has begun on the appropriateness of this policy, politically, economically and morally. It is the intent of this committee to ascertain testimony related to the Expansionist/Anti-imperialist

policy of the United States. It is vitally important that we give voice to this debate as we enter the 20th Century. The course of action we select will determine our foreign policy in this next century and beyond.

You are, therefore, required by authority of the United States Senate to appear before this committee to give testimony on this topic. Please be prepared to give a statement to the committee and to answer their questions. Your opening statement must conclude with in a five minute time period and may include any visual or audio materials you wish to present.

You may have your attorney or advisor present with you when you testify.

_____
The Honorable George Hoar
Senate Majority Leader

_____
The Honorable P.T. Winger
Senate Minority Leader

The Task

You have been subpoenaed to testify before a Senate committee in 1902. The committee is looking into the role of the United States in the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. You and your group will be given the identify of a notable Expansionist or Anti-imperialist and your group will prepare that historical character's testimony. One member of your group will play the role of the character during the hearing. Other group members will be either a newspaper reporter, a Senator or a futurist.

As the historical character you should accurately portray the views and opinion of that character. Be prepared to testify and answer questions at both the hearing and a news conference.

As a newspaper reporter you will be assigned a specific newspaper of the time. Your task will be to represent the political position of that newspaper, to formulate questions for a news conference for both congressmen and witnesses, and to write an article or editorial for your paper.

As a Senator you become aware of the issues of the time and the feeling of your constituents. You should prepare questions for witnesses, participate in a news conference and write your recommendation to the committee at the conclusion of the hearings.

The Futurist must participate in the research and create a written hypothetical opinion of the historical character on the issue of imperialism in post turn-of-the-century America, e.g. Panama, Granada, Haiti, Kuwait.

The Process

Each group will be assigned a historical figure that played a role in the Expansionism/Anti-imperialism debate at the turn of the century. Groups should then use the resources listed and those you develop to research the Expansionism/Anti-imperialism question. After preliminary research, each member of the group should be assigned a specific role.

Some things to consider:

To what areas did the United States want to extend its influence?

Why would the United States want to do so?

Why would some people object?

What is your historical figure's political party affiliation, occupation, and position on Imperialism?

What is the newspaper's geographic location, political party affiliation, and position on Imperialism?

What is the Congressperson's geographic location, political party affiliation, and position on Imperialism?

How might these same factors and concerns affect the extension of US influence and power since the turn of the century?

Resources

General Information

Anti-Imperialist
http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai_lit.html

William Jennings Bryan
http://www.grolier.com/presidents/ea/side/bryan.html
http://www.boondocksnet.com/ail/bryan.html

Mark Twain
http://marktwain.about.com/library

Clemencia Lopez
http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/ailtexts/clopez02.html

Sixto Lopez
http://www.boondocksnet.com/ailtexts/sl_000830.html
www.boondocksnet.com/ailtexts/sl001213.html
http://home.ican.net/~fjzwick/ailtexts/sl001213.html

Expansionist
http://cavern.uark.edu/web/schools/ARSC/hist/pwilliam/2/files/99web11.htm

William McKinley

http://205.185.3.2/presidents/nbk/bios/25pmcki.html
http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/glimpse/presidents/html/wm25.html
www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/history/projec...y/SpanAmWar.htm
http://www.history.ohio-state.edu/projects/McKinley/McKCartoons.htm

Teddy Roosevelt

http://205.185.3.2/presidents/nbk/bios/26proos.html
http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/inaugural/pres42.html
http://cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/century/faces/teddy.roosevelt/info.html

Rudyard Kipling: The White Man's Burden

Alfred J Beveridge

http://douglass.speech.nwu.edu/beve_a28.htm

Newpaper Reporter

Newspaper Party Affiliations and Positions on Imperialism

Senator

Futurist

Learning Advice

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To succeed in this activity you must research carefully and fully. You should know all facets of the debate. This was a very emotional and heated issue at the time. You should be prepared to accurately and forthrightly state your case. As the historical figure you must be prepared to testify to the Senate and answer questions at a news conference. The newspaper reporter and the Senator must be prepared to ask probing and informative questions and write a newspaper article or congressional recommendation that reflects an understanding of the issue. The Futurist must apply the concerns of the time to the issues that arise in a future conflict.

You are a group and for you to succeed you must work as a group. Give everyone an area of responsibility. Sharing information with other groups or researching some of their sites may prove to be useful. You may want to consider meeting with individuals in other groups who have the same role.

This topic is replete with political cartoons, poetry, and fiery rhetoric. Incorporate some of this in your testimony and writing.

Consider the role playing on a personal level. How might the person have looked or dressed? What emotions might they have expressed if given the chance to testify?

Evaluation

The teacher and students will develop a rubric based on the following criteria:

Use of primary resources
Scope and depth of research
Persuasiveness of position on issue
Quality and resourcefulness of testimony and writings
Involvement and interaction during the research and activity

Conclusions

Are the circumstances and conditions for the United States involvement in the affairs of another country the same now as they were at the turn of the century? How have the experiences since the turn of the century influenced those circumstances and conditions? What should the role of the United States be in a one "super power" world?

Reflections

Discuss the challenges and the opportunities of working in a group.

Outline in a step by step format your strategy for completing this

assignment.

What do you consider to be the qualities of a good group member?

Did you do enough research to get a feel for your character?

Did you research enough to have a good overview and knowledge of the entire problem?

Did you spend your research time wisely?

What things did you learn about research that will help you next time?

Teacher Notes

Grade 11
Late 19th Century
Grade level and unit:
U.S. Foreign Policy

Lesson Purpose:

To have students discover that many of the issues the United States faces today elicit the same type of political, philosophical and moral debate that has divided the country in the past.

Standards:

Draft H/SS Standards Grade 11:

Students trace the United States rise to power through U.S. foreign policies and involvement in the 20th century, with emphasis on:

1. The U.S. role in the Panama Revolution and building the Panama Canal
2. Causes and course of the Spanish-American War and how this related to U.S. participation in Western imperial expansion.

Students demonstrate skill in historical research and analysis by formulating questions about enduring issues and analyzing how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled.

Students interpret the significance of excerpts from famous speeches and documents in American history.

English Language Arts Standards Grade 11:

Reading Comprehension: Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organization patterns, arguments, and positions advanced.

Writing: Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly-reasoned argument. Student writing demonstrates awareness of audience and purpose and use of the states of writing process. Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions.

Listening and Speaking: Students formulate adroit judgments about oral communication. They deliver focused and coherent presentations of their own that convey clear and distinct perspectives and solid reasoning. They incorporate gestures, tone and vocabulary tailored to audience and purpose.

Goals:

The student will:

- Be able to understand the Expansionism/Anti-imperialism debate that took place in America at the turn of the century.
- Be able to use that debate to discuss the role of the United States as a world leader today.
- Be able to use the world wide web to do research.
- Be able to gather information from the web and synthesis it into articulate positions on the issues.

Information Literacy Skills:

- Students can identify potential sources of information.
- Students learn to recognize point of view from facts.
- Students organize information to solve an existing problem.
- Students understand the role of group responsibility.
- Students learn to organize material for a presentation.
- Students will take a position or point of view based on evidence.
- Students will create a logical argument in writing or speaking supported with relevant evidence.

Length of lesson:

- Seven to ten class periods

Resources or materials needed:

- The world wide web has several good sites that deal with this topic. Many of the most useful are detailed in the student resource section of this lesson.

Lesson sequence:

Introduction

Have students read Rudyard Kipling White Man's Burden and conduct a discussion on the meaning and relevance of this writing in today's world. Areas of discussion might include Bosnia, Panama, Haiti, Granada and so on.

Show the selected political cartoons:
and help students discover the conditions and issues at the turn of the century that prompted the cartoons. Give students the actual request given by the Anti-imperialist League to the United States Senate in February1903

Refer students to simulated subpoena and define the problem and project.

Student Organization

Divide students into groups of four. Each group should be assigned one of the historical figures. Students should began researching the Expansionist/Anti-imperialist debate in general and their historical figure's position specifically. Assignment to the role of historical figure, reporter, Senator and futurist should wait until students have a grasp of the issues. Students on the same side of the issue but in different groups may want to consult.

Use the press conferences (one with historical figures, one with Senators) at selected intervals prior to the hearing to evaluate student progress and understanding.

Student product

Students are asked to do the following:

- Prepare for and conduct two news conferences. One before the hearing featuring the historical figures and the reporters and one after the hearing featuring the Senators and the reporters.
- Prepare for and conduct a Senate hearing on Imperialism.
- Write a newspaper article or editorial on Imperialism.
- Write a post-hearing Senate report
- Comment in writing on the historical figure view of a related contemporary foreign policy issue.

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